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Statistical Programme 2018

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The document presents the statistical programme of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe for 2018. It is closely linked to the Biennial Programme of Work 2018-2019 (ECE/CES/2017/13), adopted by the Conference of European Statisticians in June 2017 and approved by the Executive Committee of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe in December 2017.

The Statistical Programme for 2018 was approved by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians at its October 2017 meeting.

The preliminary list of meetings held or planned to be held from the start of 2018 is annexed to this document.

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I. Background

1. The annual statistical programme describes the activities to be carried out in 2018 to implement the UNECE biennial statistical programme for 2018-2019. The biennial programme was adopted by the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) in June 2017 (document ECE/CES/2017/13) and will be reviewed by the UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) in autumn 2017. The annual programme describes:

- What the activity is about;
- Why the activity is needed, which issues or problems it addresses;
- The main focus of actions in 2018;
- The expected results and impact of these actions.

2. The programme takes into account the outcome of the UNECE review carried out by EXCOM in 2012. The review acknowledged that "the UNECE Statistics subprogramme, the Conference of European Statisticians and its related subsidiary bodies work within current mandates in an efficient way, producing concrete results (methodological principles, recommendations, guidelines and databases) in a regular and ongoing way that have clear value added for the region and beyond, and that attract extra-budgetary funding including from outside the region."

II. Introduction

3. According to the Strategic Framework for 2018-2019, UNECE works with member countries "to develop official statistics at the national and international levels for evidence-based policymaking and assessing progress towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and to ensure the coordination of statistical activities in the ECE region under the Conference of European Statisticians". The work is carried out in close cooperation with countries and international organizations, including from outside the UNECE region.

4. Work is governed by the Conference of European Statisticians[1] to ensure that it focuses on the priorities of member countries. The UNECE Statistical Division provides the secretariat for the Conference, which plays a central role in coordinating international statistical activities in the UNECE region, helping to avoid duplication of work and efficiently use the available resources. CES undertakes work on emerging topics to support development of statistics and brings together experts to develop outputs such as statistical standards, guidelines, recommendations and repositories of good practice, which often have a global impact. Furthermore, the work responds to the guidance provided by the UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) and global initiatives of the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC).

5. All CES work is guided by the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, a standard developed by CES, and endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2014 (resolution A/RES/68/261).

[1] CES is composed of the Heads of the national statistical organizations in the UNECE region and includes in addition Australia, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Japan, Mexico, Mongolia, New Zealand, Republic of Korea and South Africa. The major international organizations active in statistics in the UNECE region also participate in the work, such as the statistical office of the European Union (Eurostat), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of the Independent States (CIS-STAT), International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, Eurasian Economic Commission etc.

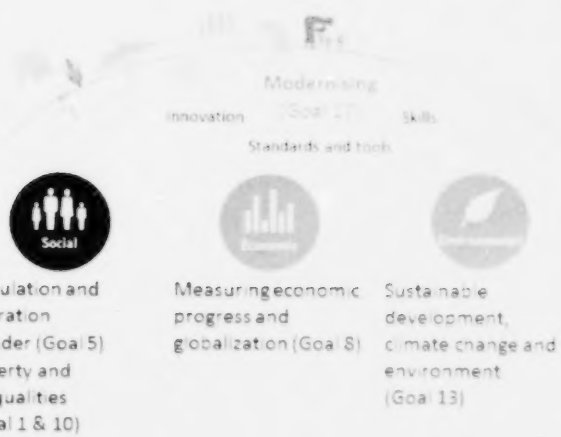
6. The work is carried out in four main areas: (1) streamlining of international statistical work in the UNECE region; (2) methodological work to develop and promote guidelines and recommendations to enhance quality of statistics; (3) capacity building in particular to measure Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and (4) the UNECE statistical database.

7. The methodological work focuses on the following priorities: economy and globalization; population and migration, gender, poverty and inequality; sustainable development, climate change and environment; institutional and legal frameworks; and statistical management and modernization. Capacity building focuses on areas highlighted by global assessments of statistical systems.

8. UNECE will continue its strong involvement in measuring sustainable development in the context of SDGs. The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* calls for a follow-up and review of the achievement of the goals and targets "based on evidence, informed by country-led evaluations and data which is high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable and disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability and geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts"[2].

9. UNECE has aligned its statistical work with the requirement to support member countries in measuring SDGs, as illustrated on the following figure.

Figure 1.
UNECE statistical work in support of measuring SDGs



III. Streamlining international statistical work in the UNECE region

10. Coordination of international statistical work in the region is a key task of CES with the aim to avoid duplication of work, find synergies, use resources efficiently and reduce the burden on national statistical offices. The Conference and its Bureau regularly discuss statistical work in the region, carry out in-depth reviews and organize seminars to explore foundational issues and emerging topics of official statistics.

[2] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld, para 74.

11. Member countries select the substantive topics that will be discussed at the annual CES plenary sessions in a seminar format. The first 2018 CES seminar will focus on Measuring what matters – Broadening official statistics. Recent years have witnessed growing interest in measuring areas that are new to official statistics or are difficult to quantify. For example, SDGs require measurement in many new areas, such as governance, peace, security etc. The Conference will consider how to take on board new topics to foster the relevance of official statistics in societies.

12. The second main topic at the 2018 CES plenary session will be strategic reflections on Modernizing communication with citizens. The seminar will consider how to develop communication to connect effectively and efficiently with people and maximize the value of statistical information in the conditions of the so-called "post-truth" era.

13. The CES Bureau will **steer** the statistical work and will meet twice in 2018 to review selected statistical areas in-depth. Some in-depth reviews carried out earlier by the Bureau will lead to follow-up work in 2018, such as:

- Better measurement of the globalized economy calls for the development of innovative and secure ways to exchange data on large multinational enterprises. As an outcome of the review, the Bureau set up a Task Force in 2017 to advance work in the exchange and sharing of economic data. The Conference emphasized the urgent need for data sharing to improve the quality of statistics while fully respecting the confidentiality of respondents' data.
- The review of data integration highlighted the challenges and potential benefits of enhanced and more integrated use of data sources for statistics. The review reported initial findings of a UNECE High-level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics (HLG-MOS) project on data integration 2016-2017. The CES Bureau will decide in February 2018 on possible follow-up to the review.
- Measuring governance, another topic reviewed in 2017, is gaining importance in the context of the 2030 Agenda. The Conference discussed the challenges in measuring governance and agreed that further work in this area may be needed in follow-up to the Praia City Group on governance statistics and taking into account relevant OECD work in this area.

14. The CES Bureau is the custodian of the widely used Classification of Statistical Activities. The latest version of the classification dates from 2009. In 2018, UNECE will initiate a review of the classification to take into account the emergence of new statistical areas, such as climate change-related statistics and statistics on governance.

IV. Methodological work on statistical standards, guidelines and recommendations

15. The aim of the methodological work is to develop and promote international standards, guidelines and recommendations to respond to countries' demand to improve the quality and comparability of official statistics and the efficiency of statistical production.

16. Flexibility of work is ensured by using teams of specialists (steering groups, task forces). The groups are set up by CES or its Bureau for a particular task with concrete terms of reference, membership, output, timeframe and a sunset clause. To ensure high quality and relevance, all CES members have the opportunity to comment on the outputs before endorsement by the Conference. New working methods are being used in modernization activities to deliver results in a much shorter time frame using "sprint sessions", short-term task teams, etc.

17. To foster collaborative work within the teams of specialists, UNECE maintains a set of tools such as wikis (which allow common working spaces and discussion forums), and organizes web conferences to connect experts, reducing the need for physical meetings.

18. The following five task forces plan to finalize their work and submit their recommendations to the CES plenary session in 2018: entrepreneurship statistics; register-based censuses; data integration for measuring migration; measuring labour mobility; and common elements of statistical legislation.

A. Economy and globalization

19. UNECE is working with countries to implement international standards and recommendations to improve the quality and comparability of economic statistics. Main priority areas include measuring economic growth, globalization, entrepreneurship, human capital, quality of employment, prices and leading, composite and sentiment indicators. Measurement of the economy is challenging due to many impacts of globalization. New ways to exchange data on large multinational enterprises securely need to be developed. The work calls for engagement with countries and multiple international partners. High-quality economic statistics are a prerequisite for the compilation of a number of indicators in the global framework for measuring SDGs.

20. UNECE promotes the implementation of the 2008 System of National Accounts (2008 SNA) to enable the provision of high-quality data for economic analysis and policies. A number of national accounts aggregates are also required for producing the indicators in the SDG framework. UNECE work on national accounts is part of the Global Implementation Programme for the 2008 SNA, mandated by UNSC. In 2018, UNECE will focus on methodological work in the areas of measuring human capital, global production and data exchange. The Group of Experts on National Accounts' will discuss also other topical issues such as new methods and data sources for producing macroeconomic statistics; national accounts and SDGs, and measuring unpaid household work. UNECE will continue to support the implementation of 2008 SNA in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South East Europe (SEE) in cooperation with other regional partners. As a follow-up to the workshop on 'Consistency between national accounts and balance of payments statistics' (October 2017, Minsk) a special session for EECCA and SEE countries will be organized in 2018 to address priority areas in the national plans of these countries for implementation of the 2008 SNA.

21. Following the recommendations of the *Guide on Measuring Human Capital*, a newly established UNECE Task Force is pursuing the development of Satellite Accounts for Education and Training. The first results will be reported to the 2018 meeting of the Group of Experts on National Accounts, convened jointly with Eurostat and OECD.

22. Globalization, in terms of growing cross-border movement of people, capital, goods and services, has a significant impact on the economies and makes it difficult to compile national statistics. In 2017, the CES Bureau established the Task Force on Exchange and Sharing of Economic Data to follow up on the main priorities identified in the *Guide to Measuring Global Production*. In 2018, the Task Force will present its first findings that aim to help countries in identifying new ways to measure global production and trade more coherently, improve data quality and increase efficiency of statistical production. UNECE will continue to collaborate with other international expert groups dealing with the impact of globalization on economic statistics e.g. it will contribute to the preparation of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) Handbook on Accounting for Global Value Chains and participate in the Integrated Global Accounts project of Eurostat.

23. UNECE, in cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other partners, promotes the implementation of international recommendations on the Consumer Price Index (CPI). CPI is a key economic indicator. It plays an important role in policy making and is widely used for indexation of wages, pensions and social security allowances. The work is guided by the CES Steering Group on CPI consisting of experts from a broad group of CES member countries and organizations. UNECE will contribute to the update of *the 2004 CPI Manual*, initiated under the auspices of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics. The updated draft manual will be discussed at the 2018 CPI Expert Group meeting organized jointly by UNECE and ILO. The meeting will also discuss the treatment of services in CPI, utilising new electronic data sources, understanding and meeting different user needs and a number of methodological issues. A special session will be organized to discuss the particular challenges in producing CPI in EECCA and South East European countries.

24. Together with Eurostat and OECD, UNECE supports the development of statistical business registers, which are indispensable for efficient data collection and production of economic statistics. UNECE will continue to support the implementation of the *UNECE Guidelines on Statistical Business Registers* in national statistical offices through Expert Group meetings, workshops and other activities. As part of the multi-donor programme to support statistical capacity building in Eastern Europe and CIS countries in the ECASTAT project, funded by the World Bank, UNECE plans to organize a regional workshop in 2018 to discuss and provide training in the development and maintenance of statistical business registers for countries in this region.

25. The CES Bureau has recognized a growing interest in entrepreneurship statistics over the past years. Linking data from statistical business registers with data from population and social registers would help produce entrepreneurship statistics and understand, among other issues, the role of women in entrepreneurship. The Task Force on Entrepreneurship Statistics established by the CES Bureau will finalise its work on developing recommendations on how to use statistical business registers to support the production of entrepreneurship statistics. The draft recommendations will be submitted for endorsement at the CES plenary session in 2018.

26. UNECE, jointly with Eurostat and ILO, leads international work on measuring the quality of employment. The aim is to respond to the demand for data on the qualitative aspects of employment beyond traditional labour force statistics. In 2018, the UNECE Steering Group on measuring quality of employment will follow up on the outcome of the Expert Group meeting in October 2017 to support the implementation of the *Statistical Framework for Measuring the Quality of Employment* in member countries. The work will include adjustments to reflect revisions of ILO standards, selected country experiences and emerging issues.

27. Leading, composite and sentiment indicators attract a lot of attention in the media and among policy makers, for instance by offering various country rankings. At the same time, there is a lack of international guidelines on the quality and compilation methods of the indicators, and the area is new to many national statistical offices. A new UNECE Task Force is developing recommendations for statistical offices on the production and dissemination of these types of indicators. The Task Force will continue its work through 2018 with the aim to finalise the recommendations in 2019.

B. Population and migration, gender, poverty and inequalities

28. UNECE develops statistics and statistical methods in areas of high policy relevance to respond to increasing demand for data on people's well-being, social environment and demographic change. The work in 2018 will focus on poverty and inequalities, migration

and labour mobility, gender, population censuses and ageing. Many challenges relate to the need to increase the use of administrative data, especially on hard-to-reach population groups.

29. UNECE supports countries' preparations for the 2020 round of population and housing censuses. Censuses represent the very foundation of statistical systems, providing baseline information on population and housing stock, which is used to produce other statistics, to plan public infrastructure and services, and to monitor SDGs. The ECOSOC resolution "2020 World Population and Housing Census Programme" from June 2015 provides a global mandate for this work. There are increasing concerns over costs, data quality, respondent burden and privacy, which call for new and more efficient methodological solutions. To address these concerns, in 2018 UNECE will organize an expert meeting and a workshop to support implementation of the *Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations for the 2020 Round of Population and Housing Censuses*, with a focus on the modernization of census methodology and technology. As an increasing number of countries aim at using administrative sources in the 2020 census, a UNECE task force is preparing *Guidelines on the use of registers and administrative data for population and housing censuses*, to be completed in 2018.

30. UNECE promotes exchange of experience and methodological work on measuring poverty and inequalities. The measuring of SDGs related to the reduction of poverty (Goal 1) and inequalities (Goal 10) requires comparable data and a coherent set of indicators. UNECE will hold an expert meeting to address the implementation of the *CES Guide on Poverty Measurement* (2017), regional needs for new methodological work, and challenges in measuring the SDG indicators on poverty and inequality. A new Task Force will work on an extended income definition and on measures of asset-based poverty. New harmonised survey tools will be developed and tested for poverty measurement in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.

31. UNECE aims at improving availability, quality and international comparability of migration statistics. This responds to the strong demand for more and better data on migration, expressed, among others, in the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants by the United Nations General Assembly. The 2018 UNECE work session on migration statistics will discuss integration of data on migration, labour mobility, and the measurement of asylum seekers, refugees and undocumented migration. A UNECE Task Force will continue work on guidelines for the integration of multiple data sources for measuring migration. Another Task Force will collect and analyse national practices in measuring labour migration. Both Task Forces are scheduled to complete their work in 2018. To enhance the use and exchange of migration data, UNECE will continue to update and improve its Clearing House on Migration Statistics.

32. UNECE work on gender statistics aims at sharing knowledge and experience and building capacity in areas where data and indicators of gender equality are insufficient or lacking. The need for better gender statistics is evident for the monitoring of SDGs, particularly to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (Goal 5). In measuring women's power and decision-making, statistics are almost entirely limited to the public sphere of life, while the policy frameworks also include decision-making in the sphere of families and households that is not covered in such statistics. In 2018, a new UNECE Task Force will work on recommendations to statistical offices on measuring the gendered dimensions of intra-household power and decision-making. UNECE will also promote the national application of its new toolkit for training the users of gender statistics.

33. Population ageing has a profound impact on a broad range of economic, political and social processes, affecting all domains of society. Ageing-related statistics are, therefore, in high demand by policymakers, as confirmed again in the Lisbon Declaration of the 2017 UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing. Recent work on the UNECE

Recommendations on ageing-related statistics (2016) revealed that there is no standardized approach for covering people living in institutions statistical data collection while this group may constitute a large part of older population. In 2018, a UNECE Task Force will develop definitions and classifications of 'institution' and 'institutional populations' as they pertain to older people, and develop guidelines for statistical offices on whether, when and how to include such populations in the production of statistics on ageing-related topics.

C. Sustainable development, climate change and environment

34. UNECE activities in this domain aim at improving statistics of high relevance to environment policy. The main priorities in 2018 will include statistics for SDGs, climate change indicators, environment statistics and the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) as well as the measurement of extreme events and disasters. A large share of SDGs relate to environment, but data need to be developed in collaboration with various national and international producers. Basic environment statistics need to be improved to derive SDG indicators.

35. In 2017, CES approved the first edition of a *Road Map on Statistics for SDGs* to implement the CES 2015 *Declaration on the Role of National Statistical Offices in Measuring and Monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals*. The aim of the Road Map is to guide the CES work on statistics for SDGs. The Road Map provides guidance on how to (i) assess the readiness of countries to report on global SDG indicators; (ii) select regional, national and subnational indicators; (iii) set up the reporting system on global indicators and the related data flows at national and regional levels; (iv) identify the needs and priorities for capacity building, and (v) establish a communication strategy on statistics for SDGs. It also addresses collaboration between various international agencies in the UNECE region. In 2018, UNECE will help countries to implement the Road Map for building up a system to provide data on SDG indicators. A Task Force will facilitate the exchange of experience on National SDG Reporting Platforms that a number of countries are currently establishing. The Road Map will be updated to take into account the outcomes of pilot testing of data flows of SDG indicators, and work on outlining statistical capacity building in the context of SDGs. A publicly available wiki provides information about the progress in implementing the CES Road Map.

36. Close attention to environmental issues has increased the demand for high quality statistics for environmental monitoring. Providing data to measure the environment related SDGs (such as Goals 6, 14 and 15) will be a challenge for the countries with less developed statistical systems. The Joint Task Force of the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy and CES will support the improvement of the production and quality of environmental statistics in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, and South-East Europe in line with the *UNECE Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia*. The work contributes to the pan-European Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) and is carried out in close cooperation with the European Environment Agency, Eurostat and UNSD.

37. The joint OECD/UNECE work promotes the implementation of the global SEEA standard in the region. The aim is to evaluate data availability and support the capacity of statistical offices to produce the necessary data. The work in 2018 will focus on implementation of SEEA in the context of SDGs and climate change. A joint OECD/UNECE Seminar on SEEA implementation was held in February 2018. The UNECE Statistical Division will also carry out several capacity building activities in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia related to the implementation of environment statistics and SEEA under the UN Development Account Program on statistics and data.

38. Work to improve official statistics for climate change analysis involves statisticians and partners from the climate community, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). In 2018, UNECE will organize an Expert Forum to discuss progress towards implementing the *CES Recommendations on Climate Change-related Statistics* in response to the Paris Agreement and SDG 13. The UNECE Steering Group will support countries in developing road maps towards the *CES Recommendations* and will collect the resulting good practices for sharing in a wiki platform.

39. UNECE Task Force will refine the initial set of core climate change-related indicators to enable countries to produce comparable information on climate change, its causes and impacts. In 2018-2019, the Task Force will develop practical guidance on data sources and methodologies to support the production of the indicator set.

40. UNECE brings together statisticians and disaster risk experts, including from the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), to develop official statistics for measuring extreme events and disasters. The UNECE Task Force will draft guidelines on the role of national statistical offices in measuring extreme events and disasters, taking into consideration relevant information needs of the Sendai Framework on Disaster-risk Reduction and the Sustainable Development Goals. The Task Force works closely together with UNISDR and the UNESCAP Exert Group on Disaster-related statistics in Asia and the Pacific.

41. Recognizing the need for better waste statistics, the CES Bureau established a Task Force on waste statistics in 2017. In 2018, the Task Force, involving experts from countries, expert institutions and international organizations (such as Basel Convention Secretariat, Eurostat, OECD and UNSD), will draft a conceptual framework on waste statistics. The framework will be an important step to harmonize waste statistics internationally, and to provide better quality information for important waste-related policies (e.g. circular economy strategies, Sustainable Development Goals and others).

D. Institutional and legal frameworks

42. UNECE activities in this domain aim at strengthening the responsiveness, accountability and transparency of statistical institutions to ensure access to high quality information, as enshrined in SDGs (Goal 16). The high demand for new information on a large number of SDG indicators requires a new approach from statistical offices, including a review of their institutional and legal frameworks to support engaging in new partnerships and taking up new tasks. In this area of work, common standards and practices rarely exist.

43. Official statisticians should build trust in factual evidence to counter the 'alternative facts'. UNECE will provide guidance on ways to increase the value of official statistics, and to measure and communicate it effectively. In 2018, UNECE will pilot test approaches to monetize the value of official statistics with a number of interested countries. UNECE will update the wiki platform with best practices related to promoting, measuring and communicating the value of official statistics to share countries' innovative work. The best practices are intended to inspire statistical offices to increase the value of statistics, and the pilot testing, in turn, will help to demonstrate that value in concrete terms.

44. The need to rethink and reinforce legal frameworks of statistical production has increased in many countries, in particular to respond to new requirements arising from the measurement of SDGs. In 2018, a UNECE Task Force will finalize guidance on common elements of statistical legislation to enable continuous development of statistical systems with partners, guarantee independence and accountability, and ensure data security and high

quality of statistics. The Task Force will build on the *Generic Law on Official Statistics*, developed by UNECE, Eurostat and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) for the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. The guidance will draw on an analysis of current strengths and weaknesses of the legal frameworks of statistical offices and will take into account challenges arising from the institutional environment where statistical offices operate. The Task Force will submit the draft guidance to the CES plenary session for endorsement in June 2018.

E. Statistical management and modernization

45. UNECE is working with countries to create frameworks, models and guidelines that will assist them to modernize. This work is overseen by the High-level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics (HLG-MOS). The HLG-MOS coordinates the activities of relevant expert groups in the UNECE region to ensure that they are working towards common goals based on the CES vision for modernizing official statistics.

46. The work aims at innovating to modernize statistics, developing new standards and tools, building capabilities and sharing tools for statistical production. In 2018, the main challenges to be tackled include how to communicate statistics better and how to integrate data. The HLG-MOS strategy will be updated during 2018. The modernization work has progressed due to regular extrabudgetary contributions.

47. Every November, a workshop is held for chief statisticians and representatives of relevant CES and other expert groups to identify the key priorities for HLG-MOS. The main topics to be considered in 2018 will be decided at this workshop and will be progressed through HLG-MOS projects.

48. The Blue-skies Thinking Network is the innovation hub of the modernization work program. It allows to support innovation and assess new opportunities for official statistics quickly. Statistical organizations can propose new ideas or areas of work to this group. If the idea has the support of at least three countries and is in alignment with the HLG-MOS Strategic Framework, a small group of people will evaluate the initial proposal to understand its potential contribution. The outcome will be a concrete proposal for further work, a completed piece of work or a recommendation that the work should not proceed.

49. The Supporting Standards Modernization group supports the implementation and use of the various standards and models (GSBPM, GAMSO, GSIM, CSPA, etc.) developed under HLG-MOS to facilitate modernization activities. In 2018, this group will review GSBPM and GSIM to ensure that these models remain relevant and are aligned fully with each other and with GAMSO. The group will also actively support implementers in using the modernstats frameworks and standards.

50. The Capabilities and Communication Modernization group considers the human resources elements of modernization. As statistical organizations continue to transform and modernize, the corporate areas of the organization should support staff in these changes. The group provides guidelines on competency profiles, training, management issues, and other methods for statistical organizations to be efficient (for example, lean management). In 2018, the group will release the new training materials on risk management. Additionally, it will follow the activities that result from the in-depth review of emerging issues in statistical communication.

51. The Sharing Tools Modernization group supports and encourages the practical implementation of the Common Statistical Production Architecture (CSPA). In 2018, the group will continue to assess potential CSPA services. The focus will be on communicating the benefits of using CSPA and helping organizations share services in the most pragmatic

way possible. This will include creating a market place for CSPA services or potential CSPA services based on supply and demand from countries.

52. In addition to the work undertaken by the modernization groups, a number of events that support the modernization work program will be organized during 2018. These will include workshops on statistical data editing, implementation of Modernstats standards, dissemination and communication, human resources management and training, and data collection.

53. A High-Level Seminar on Strategic Partnerships will be organized in 2018, building on an in-depth review on this topic by Canada, and subsequent work by an informal task team. Partnerships are becoming increasingly important for national statistical organizations, in areas such as data acquisition, geospatial information management and data for SDGs. Outcomes are expected to include guidelines and good practices on developing effective partnerships, and proposals for future work.

54. The growing importance of integrating statistical and geospatial information calls for closer collaboration between geospatial experts and statisticians. The ECOSOC resolution (E/2016/L.28) "requests that the regional commissions provide relevant support, upon request and as appropriate, to the work of the regional bodies of the United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM)." In 2018, UNECE and UN-GGIM: Europe will promote dialogue between national bodies responsible for geospatial and statistical information. In 2018, a joint high-level seminar is envisaged, building on the joint workshop of October 2017. The aim is to bring together heads of national statistical, mapping and geospatial agencies to explore areas for building collaboration at the strategic level, and to share good practices.

V. Capacity building

55. UNECE aims to enhance the capacity of national statistical systems in all member countries, and particularly those in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, to implement international standards and guidelines and meet the challenges of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Particular attention is paid to promoting the *United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics*, which provide the basis for a sound legal and institutional framework for national statistical systems.

56. These UNECE activities include:

- Global Assessments of national statistical systems;
- Capacity building workshops;
- Advisory services to address country-specific needs;
- Development of methodological guidance, survey tools and training material.

57. Capacity building activities are carried out in partnership with other international organizations, in particular with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), UNSD, Eurostat, EFTA, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Bank, the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CISSTAT) and other bilateral and multilateral partners.

58. UNECE capacity building activities are based on the findings and recommendations of Global Assessments of national statistical systems of the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. Global Assessments are carried out in cooperation with Eurostat and EFTA, and are used by various donors active in the region, such as the World

Bank. The reports represent a unique tool to provide a clear picture of the state of development of official statistics in a country. They help national authorities to better programme the long-term development of statistics, and international donors to focus their technical cooperation activities on the identified needs. Global Assessments have resulted in action plans to improve national statistics in all countries where they have been conducted. In 2018, UNECE, with the partner organizations Eurostat and EFTA, expects to complete a Global Assessment of the Republic of Moldova, and hold preparatory discussions for a possible Global Assessment of Uzbekistan.

59. A United Nations Development Account Programme on Statistics and Data will continue in 2018, to support the production of indicators to measure progress towards SDGs. UNECE will be involved in the implementation of the project in six statistical areas: means of implementation (institutional environment), environment, population, gender, poverty, and economic statistics. The Programme will include a range of workshops and other capacity building activities scheduled up to the end of 2019.

60. The Working Group on Statistics of the United Nations Special Programme for Economies of Central Asia[3] (SPECA) meets annually to discuss the needs for capacity building and to coordinate donor activities. UNECE will organize the 2018 meeting in cooperation with partner agencies. The meeting will focus on improving capacity to provide the data needed for monitoring progress towards SDGs.

61. The Steering Committee of the multi-Donor Programmatic Trust Fund to Support Statistical Capacity Building in Eastern Europe and CIS Countries (ECASTAT) will continue to finance a UNECE-led capacity building programme for the implementation of the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. The programme, which runs from 2017 to 2020, consists of a number of regional workshops and other training activities in the areas of national accounts, statistical business registers, prices, migration and remittances statistics. The Programme also supports experts' participation in statistical expert groups meetings.

VI. UNECE statistical database

62. UNECE provides a statistical database offering key statistics on member countries via free on-line interfaces in English and Russian. This work promotes open access to, and use of, data for evidence-based decision making, as requested in the 2030 Development Agenda.

63. Particular emphasis is placed on providing data on areas of high political importance to governments and to the United Nations system, such as issues relating to migration, globalization and gender equality. Work will be launched to consider how the database can support monitoring of SDGs. The compilation of data on these topics gives insights into measurement issues, and helps identify priorities for UNECE methodological work to improve the quality and comparability of national statistics, and to provide targeted support for the development of statistical systems in countries.

64. To reduce response burden on countries, data are collected from, or in cooperation with, other international organizations when this is possible. UNECE has continued its work to streamline the database activities, which has increased efficiency of data collection and facilitated timelier update and release of statistical data series.

[3] Member countries: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

65. Work to identify and publish data on progress towards SDGs will be undertaken in 2018, building upon the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) indicators available in the database, and an assessment of readiness of UNECE countries to provide data on SDG indicators.

66. The database provides the source data for publications, such as the *UNECE Countries in Figures*, as well as for preparing regular short articles on the economic and social development in the UNECE region, published in the *UNECE Weekly* newsletter and on the UNECE web page. Annual user surveys are conducted to ensure relevance and identify new user needs. Improvements to the efficiency of data processing tools will continue in 2018.

67. The UNECE statistical database is also used to disseminate data for UNECE policy work. It currently includes statistics on key socio-economic issues such as globalization, population, education, employment, work-life balance, road traffic accidents, inland transport, forest resources and protection as well as biological diversity. In this respect, the database is a strategic resource for the whole UNECE and beyond.

Annex I.
List of meetings from January 2018 to December 2018

Jointly with	Meeting (venue)	Date	Capacity Building
	Workshop on the SEEA Central Framework and SDG indicators (Minsk, Belarus)	15 - 18 January 2018	X
	CES Bureau meeting (Helsinki, Finland)	13-14 February 2018	
OECD	Seminar on SEEA implementation (Geneva, Switzerland)	21-22 February 2018	
	High-Level Seminar on strategic partnerships (Geneva, Switzerland)	11-12 April 2018	
	Workshop on ModernStats World (Geneva, Switzerland)	11-13 April 2018	
UNSD	Workshop on reporting and communicating statistics for SDGs (Geneva, Switzerland)	16 - 17 April 2018	X
	Expert Meeting on statistics for SDGs (Geneva, Switzerland)	18-19 April 2018	
	Regional coordination meeting on statistics for SDGs (Geneva, Switzerland)	20 (a.m.) April 2018	
ILO	Group of Experts on Consumer Price Indices (Geneva, Switzerland)	7-9 May 2018	
OECD Eurostat	Group of Experts on National Accounts (Geneva, Switzerland)	22-25 May 2018	
	Workshop on disseminating, communicating and using gender statistics (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan)	29 - 31 May 2018	X
	66th plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (Geneva, Switzerland)	18-20 (a.m.) June 2018	
	Workshop on statistical data dissemination and communication (Cork, Ireland)	25-27 June 2018	
EFTA	Workshop on human resources management and training (Oslo, Norway)	12-14 September 2018	
	Workshop on statistical data editing (Neuchatel, Switzerland)	18-20 September 2018	
	Workshop on population and housing censuses (Geneva, Switzerland)	24-25 September 2018	X
Eurostat	Group of Experts on population and housing censuses (Geneva, Switzerland)	26-28 September 2018	
	Expert Forum for producers and users of climate change-related statistics (to be confirmed)	2-4 October 2018 (tbc)	
	Workshop on statistical data collection (Geneva, Switzerland)	10-12 October 2018	
	CES Bureau meeting (Geneva, Switzerland)	15-16 October 2018	
	Workshop on migration statistics (Geneva, Switzerland)	23-24 October 2018	
Eurostat	Work Session on migration statistics (Geneva, Switzerland)	24-26 October 2018	
Env. Div.	Joint Task Force on environmental statistics and indicators (Geneva, Switzerland)	25-26 October 2018	
	Workshop on modernisation of official statistics (Geneva, Switzerland)	26-30 November 2018	
	Workshop on harmonization of poverty statistics (Geneva, Switzerland)	28 November 2018	

Expert Meeting on harmonization of poverty statistics (Geneva, 29-30 November 2018, Switzerland)